



## Week 5 Assignment

### Overview

Throughout this course, we have examined the role and responsibilities of an educational technology leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century information landscape. In Week 1, we looked at educational technology in terms of the Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology, the Technology Applications TEKS, and the Technology Applications Inventory. Our focus in Week 2 was on using data to make informed decisions and gathering data on educational technology through the Texas STaR Charts. Week 3's focus was on the needs of the "digital natives" we serve, online learning communities, and expectations for educators. In Weeks 4 and 5, we discussed online safety and the social, legal, and ethical issues confronting today's digital-age educators, students, and parents.

For your Week 5 assignment, you will consider the outcomes of this course and the extent to which the outcomes will influence your role as an educational technology leader in your school.

Follow these steps to complete your Week 5 assignment:

- Reflect on what you have learned in this course.
- Assume a school leadership role as an educational technology campus facilitator or as the district educational technology director. From that vantage point, compose a 150-word response to each of the guiding questions provided.
- Write reflectively instead of in question-and-answer style.
- Submit your reflections by the end of Week 5.

**Rubric**

Use the following Rubric to guide your work on the Week 5 Assignment.

Tasks ↓	Accomplished 5  The evidence suggests that this work is a "Habit of Mind." The educator is ready to mentor others in this area.	Proficient 4  The evidence suggests that performance on this work matches that of a strong educator.	Needs Improvement 3  The evidence does not yet make the case for the educator being proficient at this task.
Course Reflection	Student composes 150-word reflection on each question provided; reflections demonstrate extensive knowledge of course content.	Student composes 150-word reflections on 3-4 of the questions provided; reflections demonstrate adequate knowledge of course content.	Student composes two fewer reflections, and/or reflections exhibit a lack of understanding of course content.
Assignment Mechanics	Responses are relevant to course content; no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	Responses are relevant to course content; few errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	Responses do not reflect knowledge of course content, lack clarity and depth, and/or include multiple errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, including APA errors.

**Week 5 Assignment: Course Reflections**

What outcomes had you envisioned for this course? Did you achieve those outcomes? Did the actual course outcomes align with those that you envisioned?

I envisioned learning about current educational research on best practices for using technology in teaching and learning, and educational trends to keep us on the cutting edge. As a Technology Director with a business degree, I need a true degree in education so that I have more of a research base and instructional perspective, and thus a better understanding of technology from a teacher's point of view. Just in this first class the instruction has changed my point of view; I realized I was more focused on enforcement of technology regulations for students than on trying to find alternative ways to teach them ethics and bring them on board as supporters. The actual learning outcomes in this course exceeded my expectations, and I am already applying the concepts from this class to improve the teaching and learning experience in my District. I especially enjoyed the multiple perspectives presented, from open source software to Web 2.0 tools. "Using the technology to learn the technology" through the creation of our wikis and blogs has been a great experience.

To the extent that you achieved the outcomes, are they still relevant to the work that you do in your school? Why or why not?

All of the outcomes I achieved are very relevant to the work I do at school. The research base of this class has been very helpful and timely as I am currently writing a collaborative grant, and the digital-native, digital-immigrant research by Marc Prensky made such an impact that I have written it in as the focus of the grant professional development. I have now realized that often I've done what is technically correct and legal in my job, but not always what is best for the students. As an example, I have always been an advocate that if a student violated the AUP and downloaded porn, for example, that the student should be deprived of computer access for two weeks as punishment. I now realize that during our days in school, that would have been the equivalent of one of us drawing "dirty pictures" in class and then being told that we were forbidden to use pens or pencils in school for two weeks; how would we have gotten our work done and kept up with our class? While I know that ethics and discipline are critical for students, we must find new ways to discipline them that do not set them back or turn them off on learning.

What outcomes did you not achieve? What prevented you from achieving them?

I would not say that I have "not achieved" any outcomes during this class, but some of the outcomes in this class have been difficult and I am still struggling, especially with the consensus building concepts. As I have been a Technology Director for many years, and have always "been in charge" of educational technology since my earliest days working in education, I have found it difficult at times to put aside my pre-conceived notions and look at things from a fresh perspective. In particular, the exam questions asking "...what is the best way for Dr. X to create support for..." have been the most difficult; I am colored by my past experiences and my business degree background, and in many cases my answer would have been to simply tell them it is required or bring in more training. I am working hard to think from the "bottom up" side of consensus building, so that I can build support and inspire the teachers and students to want to do what is required instead of hammering on them that "it must be done".

Were you successful in carrying out the course assignments? If not, what prevented or discouraged you?

I enjoyed the course assignments and had little difficulty in carrying them out. As a Technology Director who constantly presents to the community, my Board of Trustees, principals and other

administrators, I am very much at home doing PowerPoint presentations and writing documents and policies based on analysis of data, including grant applications, so I had an advantage over many of my peers in this class. My biggest challenge was in doing the posting of the PowerPoint to the wiki and getting the navigation icons to work, but that was made more difficult by local content filtering as I did much of my posting from the District during breaks and other slack time, and I was unwilling to unblock sites for my convenience as that would have been unfair. In the end, the great personalized help I received from my instructors and coaches made me feel more comfortable, eased my frustration and led to a successful conclusion.

What did you learn from this course...about yourself, your technology and leadership skills, and your attitudes?

I cannot put a value on what I learned in this course; it has truly changed the way I look at my students and teachers, and has already begun to change my life. From a personal perspective, I now typically use text messaging and other digital-native technologies to communicate with the children in my family instead of calling them, and have increased my interaction with them substantially. I have already initiated the task of writing Web Publishing Policies for my District and all the members of our grant consortium. Although I have always been a leader who pushed the cutting edge with technology, I am going to focus hard on consensus building for those who may not be supporters of our new initiatives. And as mentioned above, I am changing my attitude towards the way we approach ethics and especially discipline for our students and staff so that we do not impede their progress in the process of disciplining them. I do not want our students to "switch off" when they come to school; it is my desire to change our methodologies to make them so excited about learning that they dread the bell ringing at the end of the day!